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FOR AF A/S FRAZER FROM THE AMBASSADOR
LONDON, PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: JULY 4 - HIGHLIGHTING BILATERAL PARTNERSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC
VALUES

¶1. The Mission used the July 4 reception to highlight the U.S.-Kenyan partnership and to focus on shared democratic values. (See text of Ambassador's remarks in paragraph 6.) These themes have increasingly strong resonance with all sectors of Kenyan society and politics. As a result, the turnout of well over 1,000 was the most extensive and diverse seen in decades for a Mission function. The event was extensively covered by the media. Though the cloudy day threatened rain, the skies opened as if on cue for a brief period of sunshine just as the formal ceremony concluded.

¶2. Vice President Awori attended along with Minister of Security Michuki, and a number of other ministers. Former President Moi attended. All the senior opposition leaders - led by Raila Odinga, Kalonzo Musyoka, Uhuru Kenyatta, and Musalia Mudavadi -- attended. Kenya's most prominent representative of civil society, Nobel Prize Winner Wangari Maathai, was also there.

¶3. The attendance at any national day reception -- or even official Kenyan national functions -- by such an inclusive group was unprecedented in Kenya. During the course of the reception all of these participants talked together extensively. A couple of the opposition leaders even met in the Ambassador's living room on the margins of the reception and reported that they made some modest progress on one of the issues related to the opposition Orange Democratic Movement's efforts to select a consensus candidate.

¶4. Michuki, the minister designated as the government spokesman for the event, warmly saluted the U.S.-Kenyan partnership as vital to Kenya's well-being. He talked about shared interests, including collaboration to fight terrorism. In comments clearly aimed at the broader Kenyan audience through the media, Vice President Awori spoke in Swahili to laud the U.S.-Kenyan partnership and to emphasize the government's commitment to a non-violent, transparent, and inclusive electoral process. Symbolic of this, Awori insisted that Uhuru Kenyatta, the parliamentary leader of the opposition, and Wangari Maathai, as a prominent civil society leader, join him, the Ambassador, and Michuki on the dais. (The Ambassador in his remarks noted to the gathering that it was presumably a good sign that while the vice president made his remarks in Swahili, the leader of the opposition quietly translated for the Ambassador.)

¶5. Kenyans at the reception commented very positively and enthusiastically about the unprecedented presence of Moi, Awori, so many ministers, and the opposition leaders. Though major differences separate these personalities, they readily posed for group photos, highlighting a broad show of unity in support of the democratic process. Any number of prominent Kenyans noted that we could have pulled together such a group, and pointed out that this underscores the key role that the U.S. should continue to play

in helping to keep the electoral process on track.

16. The text of the Ambassador's speech follows.

Begin text.

Celebration of the 231st Anniversary of the Independence of the
United States of America

Remarks By

Ambassador Michael E. Ranneberger
July 4, 2007

Honorable Minister, Ministers, Colleagues, Guests, and Friends:

I want to extend a very warm welcome to all of you who are here to help us celebrate the 231st anniversary of the independence of the United States of America. Here in Kenya, we are making this event a celebration of the vibrant, strong, and expanding partnership between our two countries. This is fitting because that partnership is based on the democratic values and friendship we share.

Those universal democratic values were immortally articulated by one of our founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

As we reflect upon this independence anniversary and the partnership we share, I am reminded of the Kenyan proverb: "Nia zikiwa moja kilicho mbali huja" (people with similar goals will achieve more

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from very far).

During the past 231 years Americans have consolidated institutions intended to ensure democratic government of, by, and for the people.

The progress we have made over these many years has often been difficult, sometimes painfully slow, and occasionally bloody. Examining this history tells us with certainty that the process of building democracy is never easy and is never complete. To the extent we have been successful, we have benefited from the extraordinary achievement of our founding fathers, for they put in place a constitutional framework based on the principle of checks and balances. That system was based on a hard-headed assessment that, in order to protect the interests of all citizens, the power of any one institution, individual, or group must be limited. Indeed, the challenge to balance respect for the will of the majority with the necessity to protect the rights of minorities is a constant struggle in all democracies.

Among the many things that we share, the United States and Kenya are both communities which encompass great diversity of cultures, ethnic and racial groups, and religions. That diversity enriches and strengthens our nations. The approach of elections in our two countries provides a timely opportunity to reflect upon how we strive to accommodate this diversity and, in so doing, to perfect our democratic systems. Though Americans have had far more time to build our democracy than Kenya has, we can truly say that neither democratic system is perfect. In both countries we struggle to fight corruption, to promote communal harmony, to foster security, and to bring about gender equity.

Acutely aware of our own imperfections, we support the efforts of the Kenyan people to address these difficult challenges, which we also confront. The old Swahili saying that "kila mlango na ufunguo wake" (every door has its own key) means that Kenyans have to solve their problems in their own ways. The Kenyan people have made remarkable progress in recent years, but the work of deepening and broadening democracy and improving governance is never done. As a reliable friend, we will continue to assist your efforts and to support the positive momentum underway.

The United States and Kenya have much to learn from each other.

Drawing on our long experience with democracy, we seek to assist Kenya to consolidate its democracy, most importantly this year through inclusive, non-violent, and transparent elections. We hope that there will be very broad participation in Kenya's elections in a way that may, perhaps, inspire Americans, whose participation in even national elections barely rises above fifty percent of registered voters.

Americans and Kenyans also share a belief in the power of the collective spirit, profoundly illustrated by both countries' journeys to independence. I am struck by two Swahili sayings that seem to capture, long before America was founded, a sense of this faith in the will of the people. One says: *Penye wengi pana Mungu* (Where there are many people, there God is). Another reads: *Panapo wengi hapaharibiki neno* (where there are many, nothing goes wrong). Ladies and gentlemen, we're many, and we trust that this gathering is blessed.

Please join me in raising our glasses in a toast to the 231st anniversary of the independence of the United States of America, and to Kenya's democratic progress, to the rich partnership between the United States and Kenya, and to the health of Presidents Kibaki and Bush.

End text.

RANNEBERGER